

Speech by Alexander Graham Bell, November 10, 1894

GROWTH OF THE ORAL METHOD OF INSTRUCTING THE DEAF.

AN ADDRESS Delivered November 10, 1894, on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Opening of the Horace Mann School, Boston, Mass. BY ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL.

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1896.

GROWTH OF THE ORAL METHOD OF INSTRUCTING THE DEAF.

ADDRESS OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is indeed a great privilege to be able to join with you in congratulating the Horace Mann School for the Deaf on the twenty-fifth anniversary of its birth. I have a very deep personal interest in this school, for it was the means of

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bringing me to America. The School Board of Boston, at the solicitation of Miss Fuller, your worthy principal, invited me to visit the United States for the purpose of helping her teachers in their efforts to teach the deaf children of Boston to speak, and to understand speech by watching the movements of the mouth; and in April, 1871, I entered upon the work.

I note with sadness how few of the early teachers remain. Miss Fuller is here, Miss True is here; the others have passed away. As I recall those early days when I first knew this school, and when it occupied a very different building from the palatial structure in which we are to-day, I remember the face of an old man passing from class to class, a man who loved the school, — its founder, its friend, — and who almost lived in the school during the school hours of the pupils. I refer to the Hon. Dexter S. King. I look upon your walls, but I see no memorial of his name. I trust that the School Board of Boston may yet record in an enduring tablet, or in some other enduring manner, the name of that good man, who was the earliest and best friend that the school has ever had.

This was a very little school at the time that I remember it, a very young school, — only two years old, — an experimental school. People really did not know whether it was practicable to teach the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear. The public looked upon this as a sort of miracle; and we all knew that the days of miracles had gone. But many of the miracles of the past are to-day every-day facts; and every mother of a deaf child now knows, to her joy, that her child can be taught to speak, if not as well as other children, yet so as to be intelligible to her and her friends at home, and that her 4 child can be taught to understand the speech of others by means of his eyes. This is a glorious accomplishment. No one doubts it to-day, for there are too many hundreds, too many thousands, of instances. It is an accomplished fact, it is no longer an experiment.

I can remember with somewhat of amusement the feelings which actuated myself when I first came into contact with this school. As a student of the mechanism of speech, familiar with it from my childhood, this subject, in fact, having been the professional study of my

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family for three generations, I realized that deaf children whose vocal organs were perfect could be taught to speak. I understood, of course, that no one naturally speaks a language that he has never heard, and that as a matter of course a child who has never heard the English language could only acquire it by instruction. I was therefore prepared for the claims of my friend, Miss Fuller, that the deaf children of the city of Boston could be taught to speak. But I must confess that I was extremely sceptical in regard to the possibility of their understanding speech by watching the movements of the mouth. It is more difficult for one who is familiar with the mechanism of speech to realize the possibility of this than for one who is ignorant of it; and, to be candid, I did not believe it. Of course I was too polite to say so to my friend, Miss Fuller; but still there was that lurking feeling in my mind, that the claim that deaf children could understand the speech of their friends to any great or useful extent was too broad. Observation, however, assured me that the children really did seem to understand, to a very useful extent, the utterances of their friends and their teachers; they were not deaf at home; they were not deaf with their teachers; and my curiosity was so much aroused to ascertain the cause of what seemed from my point of view impossible as to lead me to make the instruction of the deaf my life work.

My original scepticism concerning the possibility of speech-reading had one good result: it led me to devise apparatus that might help the children. Why should we not make a machine to hear for them, a machine that should render visible to the eyes of the deaf the vibrations of the air that affect our ears as sound? I made many such machines. I varied my form of apparatus all the way from the phonautograph of Leon Scott up to an apparatus constructed of a human ear taken from a dead subject. A pencil actuated by the membrana tympani recorded upon a sheet of smoked glass the utterances that were spoken into the dead man's ear. These experiments were what the world calls failures; that is, they did not accomplish the result intended. I did not succeed in making an apparatus into which a deaf child could look and see the vibrations of speech so recorded as to enable him to understand what was said, or to recognize the elements of speech. It was a failure; but that apparatus, in process of time, became the telephone of to-day. It

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did not enable the deaf to see speech as others hear it, but it gave ears to the telegraph, and to-day we hear in Boston what is spoken in New York or Chicago. I trust you will pardon personal allusions to my own work; it is only right that it should be known that the telephone is one of the products of the work of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf, and resulted from my attempts to benefit the children of this school. I am proud indeed to think that twenty-three years ago I was myself a teacher in this school; I am proud to think that I have been a teacher of the deaf ever since.

In celebrating this anniversary it may be well to take a glance around us at the other schools of the country and see where the Horace Mann School stands.

Quite a number of different methods of instruction are in use in America; and day-schools and boarding-schools — large and small — are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land. The oral method, which Boston has adopted, is used with less than 25 per cent. of our pupils; and day-schools constitute only a small minority of the schools of the country (between 16 and 23 per cent.).¹

¹ The latest statistics (1893) show that out of 8,304 pupils in American schools for the deaf, 2,056, or 24.7 per cent., were taught wholly by the oral method. Total schools, 79 (boarding 61, day 13, unknown 5). See "Annals" for January, 1894, XXXIX., pp. 52 to 62.

Is Boston then justified in the adoption of the oral method and the day-school plan? Or are other methods more successful, and boarding-schools preferable to day-schools?

The best way to approach this subject, I think, is to examine the matter historically and statistically.

Where you have a free competition of methods and schools, and a struggle among them for existence, natural selection will surely operate to bring about the survival of the fittest. Time will reveal the best.

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The first oral schools were established in 1867, so that we have as yet only twenty-seven years of progress of the oral method to examine. The French or sign system with which it came into competition was introduced in 1817, and for fifty years had the whole field of America to itself without opposition. The oral schools thus started under the disadvantage of having to dispute progress with a method that was already

2 The length of this paper renders it advisable to omit the greater portion of my historical remarks concerning the early schools of the country. I do this the more readily because all the material is accessible in printed form in the great work published by the Volta Bureau (Washington, D.C., 1893), entitled "Histories of American Schools for the Deaf," issued under the able editorship of Dr. Edward Allen Fay, Vice-President of the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and editor of the "American Annals of the Deaf." A. G. B.

6 well intrenched upon American soil, and which considered the advent of the oral method as a hostile act.

What has been the progress of this method since? Statistics compiled from the "American Annals of the Deaf" yield the following results:

1See call for "The First Conference of Superintendents and Principals of American Schools for the Deaf," "Annals," 1868, Vol. XIII., p. 133. "The increased interest manifested by the public during the past year in the education of the deaf and dumb, taking in certain localities the form of hostility to the system of instruction successfully practised in this country for a half-century, has led the officers of this institution" (The Columbia Institution) "to consider the present an opportune time for the assembling in conference of those best fitted by practical experience and long study to judge what measures and methods will most conduce to the welfare of the deaf and dumb of our country. . . . We have therefore determined to invite the principals of the regular institutions of the United States to meet here on Tuesday, the 12th of May next," etc. The oral schools existing in Northampton, Mass., and New York City were not invited, and were not represented at the meeting

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that followed; but the conference passed a resolution to the effect that at subsequent conventions teachers and others should be invited, "without regard to the method or system they may use in their labors." ("Annals," 1868, XIII., p. 253.)

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I. STATISTICS OF THE NEW ENGLAND STATES.

NUMBER OF PUPILS. PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS. DATE. Total Pupils. Taught Articulation. Taught wholly by the Oral Method. Taught Articulation. Taught wholly by the Oral Method. 1868 304 38 12.4 1869 320 41 12.8 1870 370 76 20.5 1871 387 95 24.6 1872 409 119 29.1 1873 418 138 33.0 1874 411 147 35.8 1875 437 168 38.4 1876 442 162 36.7 1877 471 199 42.3 1878 466 Statistics wanting. 204 43.8 1879 483 228 47.2 1880 476 243 51.1 1881 479 246 51.4 1882 484 260 53.7 1883 498 269 54.0 1884 520 343 289 66.0 55.6 1885 512 348 287 68.0 56.1 1886 500 366 293 73.2 58.6 1887 508 405 304 79.7 59.8 1888 501 418 322 83.4 64.3 1889 531 450 339 84.7 63.8 1890 529 460 343 86.9 64.8 1891 564 506 365 89.7 64.7 1892* 504 447 334 88.7 66.3 1893* 524 461 351 87.6 67.0

* Figures refer to number of pupils present November 15.

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In 1868, the year preceding the opening of the Horace Mann School, the total number of deaf pupils in the New England States was 304. Of these, 38, or a little more than 12 per cent., were found in oral schools. Since then the percentage has continuously increased until, on Nov. 15, 1893, out of a total of 524 pupils, 351, or 67 per cent., were found in exclusively oral schools.

Thus, so far as the New England States are concerned, the verdict of time has been exceedingly favorable to the oral method.

Starting from two independent centres in the East (Northampton, Mass., 1867; New York city, 1867), the oral movement gradually spread to other parts of the United States; but it is difficult to trace its progress in the country as a whole, because the "Annals" has failed to give us special statistics upon the subject until quite recently.

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It so happens that in the sign or so-called "combined" schools of the New England States no pupils are taught wholly by the oral method, so that the growth of the method in these States can be ascertained by simply adding together the pupils in attendance at the oral schools.

Outside of the New England States, however, the movement progressed not simply by the establishment of rival schools in competition with the older schools of the country, but by the actual invasion of the latter themselves. The oral method has penetrated into many of these schools, so that in the same school some pupils may be taught by the sign and others by the oral method. This is what is usually meant by the term "combined system," but the term is applied so vaguely that many of the schools which are classified in the "Annals" as pursuing the "combined system" do not employ the oral method at all with any of their pupils. The indefiniteness of the classification has thus rendered it extremely difficult to ascertain from the published figures the extent to which the oral method is employed in American schools for the deaf.

In 1892 the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf directed attention to the lack of statistics concerning the matter, and requested the "Annals" to publish annually the number of pupils "taught wholly by oral methods, and the number taught in part by oral methods."¹

¹ "Proceedings of Second Annual Meeting, 1892," p. 139.

In response to this request the "Annals" has since given us the number taught "wholly" by oral methods;² but we are still in ignorance of the full extent to which the method is employed in American schools for the deaf.

² See "Annals" for 1893, Vol. XXXVIII., pp. 52 to 62; also p. 312.

PERCENTAGE CHART. GROWTH OF SPEECH-TEACHING IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF, GRAPHICALLY SHOWN. 1. Percentage of pupils in the New England

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States taught wholly by the oral method. 2. Percentage of pupils in the United States taught wholly by the oral method. 3. Percentage of pupils in the New England States receiving instruction in articulation. 4. Percentage of pupils in the United States receiving instruction in articulation.

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The available statistics are as follows:

II. STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES.

NUMBER OF PUPILS. PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS. DATE. Total Pupils. Taught Articulation. Taught wholly by the Oral Method. Taught Articulation. Taught wholly by the Oral Method. 1884 7,482 2,041 27.2 1885 7,801 2,618 33.5 1886 8,050 2,484 30.8 1887 7,978 2,556 32.0 1888 8,372 3,251 38.8 1889 8,575 3,412 Statistics wanting. 39.7 1890 8,901 3,682 41.3 1891 9,232 4,245 963† 46.0 10.4 1892* 7,940 3,924 1,581 49.4 19.9 1893* 8,304 4,485 2,056 54.0 24.7

* Figures refer to number of pupils present November 15.

† Ascertained by Prof. Joseph C. Gordon. See Introduction to "Education of Deaf Children," published by the Volta Bureau.

The indications are very clear that the oral method is a growing method in the United States.

Of course we cannot tell certainly what the future may have in store, but this much is certain concerning the past: From the very first moment of its appearance in this country up to the present time the oral method has steadily gained ground, the percentage of pupils taught by it has continuously increased.

I submit, therefore, that Boston is fully justified in its adoption of that method in the Horace Mann School.

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Looking back upon the past, we may note that the oral method has advanced in spite of bitter opposition from the sign teachers of the country. The advocates of the oral method have been ridiculed, their motives aspersed, their successes belittled, and their failures magnified; and yet in spite of all this the percentage of pupils taught by the oral method has continuously increased. What does this mean? Is not this continuous advance in spite of bitter opposition an evidence of intrinsic superiority? Without a struggle for existence, natural selection cannot operate to bring about the survival of the fittest. A great State institution having the whole field of a State to itself without opposition has no necessary tendency to improve: the unfit may there survive. But where you find little oral schools springing into existence through private enterprise, in competition with long-established sign schools wielding all the power and patronage of a State, and a bitter struggle going on between them, and then find as the result of the struggle that the oral schools survive, and the State institution introduces oral teaching, changing from the sign or manual method to what is called "the combined system," do we not find here an evidence of superiority on the part of the oral method, compelling advance?

If the invasion of the sign institutions by the oral method continues in the future at anything like the rate it has done in the past, it is obvious that the Oral Method will ultimately become the prevailing method in the United States. The indications of twenty-seven years of progress point in that direction, but the ultimate verdict of time has yet to be given. If we could only wait for one hundred years! If we could only wait to celebrate the centennial of this school, we would then know certainly what methods are best in the instruction of the deaf. Natural selection would have had time to do its work, and questions that perplex us to-day would then have received their final answer.

We have a long time to wait before we can examine a century of progress of the oral method in this country; but I would direct attention to the fact that both the sign and oral methods have existed for more than a century in Europe. May we not then turn hopefully to Europe for light upon the subject? What has been the result of the struggle between

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these methods there? And if we find that the changes here correspond to the progress made in Europe at an earlier period of time, may we not infer that the present condition of affairs in Europe is typical of the future here?

Now what are the facts so far as Europe is concerned?

The results of oral instruction in Germany early compelled universal recognition of the fact that many of the deaf could be taught to speak and understand speech by watching the mouths of others. This led the sign teachers to modify their method and combine speech-teaching with signs. Little by little the sign method pure gave place to a combined system in which, though the general education of the children was still conducted by the manual or sign-language method, speech was taught to some or all of the pupils. Thus a stage was reached in which the question of speech-teaching no longer formed the bone of contention. All teachers agreed that all of the deaf who could be taught to speak should be taught. But they differed upon the questions of signs. (This is exactly the position that has been reached to-day by American teachers of the deaf.)

Europe was divided into two opposing camps. On the one hand were the oralists, led by Germany, who urged that all of the deaf should be taught orally, without resort to the sign language or conventional signs of any sort. On the other were the advocates of a combined method, led by France, who insisted that the sign language, as well as speech, should be employed in the instruction of the deaf.

The advocates of these two opposing plans came to be known respectively as the "Purists" and "Non-purists." The "pure" oralists believed in discarding the sign language altogether; the "Non-purists" believed in a combined system in which both speech and signs should be employed.

The question in point was finally settled at an International Convention of Teachers of the Deaf which met in Milan, Italy, in September, 1880.

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This convention declared by an almost unanimous vote (160 ayes to 4 noes) that the oral method ought to be preferred to that of signs, and the pure oral method to the combined system. (See Appendix A.)

The negative votes were cast by Mr. Richard Elliott, of England, and by three American delegates;¹ so that the vote was absolutely unanimous so far as continental Europe was concerned.

¹ “The American representatives were Dr. Peet and the Rev. Drs. Stoddard and Gallaudet, of New York, and Dr. Gallaudet and Mr. Denison, of Washington.” (“Annals,” 1880, Vol. XXV., p. 293.)

The following table shows the extent to which the oral method was employed on the Continent at about this time. The figures have been compiled from statistics collected by the “Annals” in 1881 and 1882.²

² See “Annals” for 1883, Vol. XXVIII., p. 61.

The statistics include details concerning 280 schools upon the continent of Europe, containing 15,569 pupils and 1,190 teachers.

The vast majority of these schools (81 per cent.) were pure oral schools; a small minority (4 per cent.) were sign schools; and the remainder (15 per cent.) pursued a combined system.

It is to be regretted that the “Annals” has not continued the publication of similar statistics so as to enable us to trace statistically the changes brought about by the adoption of the Milan resolutions.

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III. STATISTICS OF CONTINENTAL EUROPE (1881–1882).

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METHOD OF INSTRUCTION. NUMBER OF PERCENTAGE OF Schools. Pupils.

Teachers.	Schools.	Pupils.	Teachers.	Oral	Sign	Combined	Total*
205	11,994	1,035	81%	80%	89%	10	629
34	4%	4%	3%	38	2,332	95	15%
16%	8%	253	14,955	1,164	100%	100%	

* Not including 27 schools (containing 614 pupils and 26 teachers) in which the methods of instruction pursued were not reported.

The decision of the Milan Convention regarding methods of instructing the deaf has been accepted as final by all subsequent conventions of teachers that have met upon the continent of Europe;¹ and most of the sign and combined schools of the Continent have since adopted the oral method. (See Appendix B.)

¹ Bordeaux Convention, 1881; Brussels Convention, 1883 (The Third International Convention); Christiania Convention, July, 1884; Paris Convention, September, 1884; Berlin Convention, September, 1884; Paris Convention, August, 1885; Vienna Convention, April, 1892; Nagold Convention, May, 1892; Genoa Convention, September, 1892. (See Proceedings of these conventions; also "Notes and Observations upon the Education of the Deaf," by Prof. Joseph C. Gordon, published by the Volta Bureau, pp. xxxvi and xxxvii; also "American Annals of the Deaf," 1882, p. 129; 1884, p. 143; 1885, pp. 78, 175, 229; 1886, p. 77; 1893, pp. 86 to 91, and p. 243.)

The adoption of the oral method by France is especially significant. For a hundred years the sign and oral methods had been known respectively as the "French" and "German" systems of instruction. For the French to abandon their national method and adopt a system of German origin is of itself an acknowledgement of the intrinsic superiority of the oral method. The very school of the Abbé de l'Epée, where the sign method originated, is now an oral school.

It will thus be seen that natural selection, operating upon the continent of Europe for more than a century, has brought about the survival of the pure oral method and the almost total

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extinction of the French system of signs. The verdict of time is therefore conclusive as to the superiority of the oral over the sign method of instructing the deaf.

A few years ago (January, 1886) a commission was appointed by the British crown to examine into the whole subject of the education of the deaf, and to report their recommendations to the British Parliament. This Royal Commission gave to the subject the most thorough and searching examination that the world has ever seen.

Prof. Joseph C. Gordon, in his Introduction to "Education of Deaf Children" (published by the Volta Bureau), says:

"This Commission endeavored to examine the whole field of deaf-mute instruction with characteristic British thoroughness and energy. Schools upon the Continent were visited, and in London the Commissioners held one hundred and sixteen sittings, calling before them for examination forty-three persons as experts specially interested in the welfare of the deaf, and deemed capable of giving information of great value upon the subjects of inquiry."

The complete report of the Commission forms a great work of 1,574 pages, which was presented to the British Parliament in 1889. As a result of their labors they recommended "that every child who is deaf should have full opportunity of being educated on the pure oral system."

(See Appendix C.)

Shortly after the Milan Convention (September, 1880) the "Annals" (in 1881) collected statistics concerning the methods of instruction employed in the schools for the deaf throughout the world. (See "Tabular Statement of the Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb of the World," "Annals," 1882, Vol. XXVII., pp. 32–53.) Much of the material relating to foreign schools had been obtained through the department of State and our diplomatic representatives abroad; and the published tables were then sent to the foreign schools

themselves for verification and revision. The revised summary of results was published in the "Annals" for January, 1883, Vol. XXVIII., p. 61. (See Appendix D.) The statistics include details concerning 399 schools, containing 26,473 pupils and 2,029 teachers. From the published table it appears that at this time (1882) the majority of the schools of the world (66 per cent.) were pure oral schools; a small minority (9 per cent.) were sign schools; and the remainder (25 per cent.) pursued a combined system. These are the latest available figures, as the "Annals" did not continue to publish similar statistics after January, 1883.

The following table gives a synopsis of the results:

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IV. STATISTICS OF THE WORLD (1882).

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION.		NUMBER OF		PERCENTAGE OF		Schools.		Pupils.		Teachers.	
Oral	239	13,246	1,182	66%	52%	60%	Sign	32	1,642	130	9%
6%	7%	Combined	91	10,566	654	25%	42%	33%	Total*	362	25,454
100%	100%									1,966	100%

* Not including 37 schools (containing 1,019 pupils and 63 teachers) in which the methods of instruction pursued were not reported.

In consideration of all these facts it is obvious that Boston is fully justified in pursuing the oral method in the Horace Mann School. It is today the prevalent method in Europe and in the world at large; and though only a minority of our pupils are yet taught by it, it is a growing method in the United States, and undoubtedly destined to much greater expansion in the near future.

The diversity of methods at present existing in the United States is eminently favorable to improvements in the art of instructing the deaf.

The "auricular" and "manual-alphabet" methods, like the "oral," seem to be growing methods in this country; but they are of too recent origin for us to tell much about them;

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and the statistics concerning their growth are too meagre as yet to be made the basis of research. The manual-alphabet method especially has made great progress of recent years. Personal observation convinces me that manual spelling is rapidly displacing the French sign-language wherever oral teaching has not prevailed, but statistics are wanting by which to measure the change. All of these methods (the oral, the auricular, and the manual-alphabet methods) are progressing at the expense of the sign method, which, though still extensively employed in the United States, is everywhere upon the wane. For the present, at least, the contest remains in America as it always has been in the past, — a struggle mainly between the sign and oral methods of instructing the deaf.

In Germany the controversies in which we are engaged are things of the past that have long been settled. For many years all the schools of Germany have been pure oral schools; the controversies there have taken a new form, — a form which touches the Horace Mann School. It is a question as to the character of school — whether of the institutional or the day-school form. The institutions or boarding-schools of Germany have been gradually changing, little by little, into day-schools, until now the majority are day-schools. (See Appendix E.) Most are exclusively day-schools (*externat*), a minority are boarding-schools (*internat*), and a new class of school (*internat-externat*) that has no existence at all in our country, so far as I know, has grown up from the conflict between the *externat* and the *internat*.¹ The defendants of the day-school assert that the home relations of the children are unbroken, that the influence of the parents in instructing the children at home is of enormous consequence, that the use of speech in communication with friends and relatives at home is a stimulus to speech; while the advocates of the boarding-school think that the teachers can do better work if they have the pupils all the time under their control. In the mixed school (*internat-externat*), the pupils board in the school for the first two or three years of their school life, and then, as they grow up, and are able, to some extent, to communicate with hearing persons, they are boarded out in families, under the idea¹ that practice in speaking with hearing persons is of advantage to them. The idea seems to be that as these children are to be fitted to live in a world

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of hearing people and communicate with them, as their education progresses and they become more able to communicate with hearing people they should be thrown into communication with hearing people more and more as time advances, and not simply be plunged into a hearing world at the end of their school career, without any preparation in regard to what communication with hearing people means.

1 In Germany as a whole 51.6 per cent. are day-schools, 35.8 per cent. are boarding-schools, and 12.6 per cent. are mixed schools. In Prussia 70 per cent. are day-schools, 13 per cent. boarding-schools, and 17 per cent. mixed. (See Appendix E, also report from Germany in Appendix B.)

I venture to predict that the same course that has gone on in Germany will go on here, and that the oral day-school for the deaf, which is today in the minority in America, will in the future represent the majority of our schools. All honor to the noble women who have been working so faithfully and so long in the interests of the deaf children of Boston.

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APPENDIX A. THE MILAN CONVENTION (September, 1880).

Some months in advance of the meeting, public notice was given of the questions and subjects that would be discussed by the Convention, in a letter of invitation addressed to "The Teachers and Friends of the Deaf and Dumb" in all parts of the world. The following were two of the topics proposed:

1. Point out the advantages of the method of articulation over that of signs, and the reverse. (This should be considered principally with a view to instruction, without neglecting that which concerns social life.)
2. Explain in what the *pure oral* method consists, showing the difference between this method and that called *combined*. ("Annals," April, 1880, Vol. XXV., p. 156.)

The formal answer of the Convention to these questions was as follows:

1. This Convention, considering the incontestable superiority of speech over signs in restoring the deaf-mute to society and in giving him a more perfect knowledge of language, declares that the oral method ought to be preferred to that of signs for the education and instruction of the deaf and dumb.
2. This Convention, considering that the simultaneous use of speech and signs has the disadvantage of injuring speech, lip-reading, and precision of ideas, declares that the pure oral method ought to be preferred. ("Annals," 1881, Vol. XXVI., p. 64.)

APPENDIX B. REPORTS FROM ABROAD (1893–4)

Presented to the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, by the Hon. John Hitz, Superintendent of the Volta Bureau (see "Proceedings of Fourth Summer Meeting," Chautauqua, N. Y., July, 1894). The following are quotations from some of these reports:

Italy: "The oral method generally prevails, the manual only in exceptional instances in certain schools for the deaf. It is noticeable that instructors for the manual method are no longer being trained.

" G. Ferreri, " *V. Direttore del. R. Istituto Pendola pei Sordomuti, Siena.* "

France: "Public instruction of the deaf was inaugurated in France by the Abbé l'Epée in 1760, the sign language being used at first. Bebian simplified the methods employed, and Valade-Gabel modified, perfected, and rendered more permanent the system of instruction. Up to 1879 the sign language, writing, and articulation were used in various ways in the instruction of the deaf in France.

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“Inspector-General Claveau introduced the oral method into the National Institute for Deaf-Mutes in Bordeaux, and into the National School for Deaf-Mutes in Paris; and, finally, after the congress held in Milan in 1880, most of the French schools adopted the pure oral method, excluding the sign language altogether. Since then all new pupils, entering schools where the deaf are taught, receive instruction in lip-reading and articulation. In 1885 a national congress brought together in Paris the French instructors interested in this subject, and they discussed the results obtained and the efforts to be made for the future. Since the adoption of the oral method, all efforts have been mainly directed towards adapting this method to whatever may present itself in the line of instruction, rather than any endeavor to inaugurate new methods; moreover, its general use has been effected.

“Of 70 schools with 400 teachers and 3,790 pupils (a few small institutions excepted), nearly all use the oral method.

“(Signed) A. Belanger, “ *Prof. and Libr. at the National Institute in Paris.* ”

Germany: “Germany at present has 95 schools and educational institutions for the deaf. Of these, 48 are day-schools (externate), 34 are boarding-schools (internate), and 13 are partly day and partly boarding schools (inter-externate). Total number of pupils, 6,400, of which 3,614 are boys and 2,786 are girls, under a corps of 650 teachers, of which number 64 are ladies.

“In Northern Germany it appears day-schools are more numerous, whereas in Southern and Western Germany boarding-schools outnumber day-schools. This difference is to be accounted for by the religious predilections of the two sections; Protestants being in the majority in Northern Germany, whilst in Southern and Western Germany the population is prevaillingly Catholic. The mixed, or day and boarding, school is an institution of recent date. During the first few years of their attendance, the pupils of these schools are furnished with board and lodging in the school buildings, approximating family life as nearly as possible. Their young lives run here their daily course; they are here trained

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under the supervision, discipline, and linguistic instructions of accomplished teachers of the deaf from early morning till late at night. It is here that war is successfully waged against signs, and it is here that they are rendered capable of freely conversing by speech during the remainder of their attendance at school, in which, after the first few years, they become day scholars. This arrangement embodies all desired advantages, and, it would seem, is certainly the school system of the future.

“ . . . In recent years an embittered contest has been waged in Germany among instructors of the deaf and certain adult deaf as to the greater or less adaptability of the oral or the sign-language methods. Fortunately this contest, in the interest of the instructors of the deaf and of deaf-mute instruction generally, has waned and lessened in acrimony and fanaticism. 18 The question is being discussed and considered more calmly and practically, devoid of personal predilections. In some of the larger German institutions for the deaf, pupils have already been classified and separated, a lower standard being exacted for the requirements of intellectually less favored, for instance, in Schleswig, Ratibon, etc. On the other hand, the agitation against the exclusive employment of the oral method, and in favor of the partial use of gestures and writing in the instruction of the deaf (as, for instance, has been introduced into Denmark), in Germany, so far, has nowhere resulted in practical application, although many a pen and much printer's ink has been employed in effecting it.

F. W. Reuschert, “ *Principal of the Strassburg-Neudorf School for the Deaf.* ”

Great Britain: “As regards methods, the pure oral method is making sure progress. Articulation has already found its entrance into schools where hitherto it has been excluded, and although speech' may not as yet be used as the exclusive means of conveying instruction, the rising generation of teachers will undoubtedly get a more thorough knowledge and appreciation of the pure oral system, and will contribute toward its general adoption.

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“ William Van Praagh, “ *Director, Training College for Teachers of the Deaf*, “11 Fitzroy sq., London.”

Denmark: “All children of school age are received at the oral institution at Fredericia (Jutland), and while the children not totally deaf or having some little speech are immediately transferred to the oral school at Nyborg (Funen), and the feeble-minded to a separate institution at Copenhagen, the remainder are retained at Fredericia, and about one-third of them, after a trial lasting one year, are transferred to the old royal institution at Copenhagen, a manual school. The children not transferred are at the Fredericia institution formed into two divisions, A (the bright children) and B (the children of average intellect), both taught by the oral method.

“During the year 1893 a sharp controversy took place between the manual school of Copenhagen on the one side and the schools of Fredericia and Nyborg on the other. The last-named schools wished to limit still more the number of children not taught by speech, while the first-named asserted that the oral method had been allowed to extend further than advisable under a school organization like that of Denmark. This dispute has caused the founding of an association headed by the principals of Fredericia and Nyborg, aiming to withhold the orally taught deaf from the influence exercised over the graduating pupils by the numerous circle of sign-taught deaf in the Danish metropolis, who have an association of their own. The oral association now edit a periodical named the ‘ *Effata*, ’ in order to propagate their views, while the association of the deaf at Copenhagen have for several years had a representative in the press named ‘ *Smaablade for dovstumme*. ’”

Norway: “A plan of organization was adopted in 1890, according to which all deaf children were to be received into three schools, one at Christiania, 19 one at Trondhjem, and one at Bergen; the last named taking in pupils bi-annually, while the intellectually weak children, after a trial of one year at the original schools, are transferred to a separate — also oral — school at Hamar.”

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Sweden: "While the divergencies of opinions as to methods in cases where the manual method formerly was the preponderating one in schools were adjusted by a compromise, giving the oral-method schools two-thirds of the children and the manual-method schools one-third, — viz., the intellectually weak children, — it appears that the authorities in the places where they are at liberty to do as they please are inclined to try the application of the oral method in the instruction of all children."

Finland: "The Grand Duke of Finland, Emperor Alexander III., issued, July 30, 1892, an ordinance relating to the education of the deaf and blind. Among other enactments the following may be noticed:

"In the cities of Knopio and Aabo shall be established oral schools adapted to receive eighty-five or ninety pupils each; the *instruction is to be given in the Finnish language*.

"In the city of Borgaa shall be established a school adapted to receive forty-five or fifty pupils; the *instruction is to be given in the Swedish language*.

"The Finnish schools at Knopio and Aabo shall, after one year's trial, transfer those children who cannot profit by the oral method to the manual school at St. Michel.

"The Swedish school at Borgaa shall, in the like manner, transfer part of its pupils to a school at Jakobstad.

"In order to educate pupils too old to be received in ordinary schools, a Finnish school shall temporarily be established at Jyvoskylo and a Swedish one in connection with the manual school at Jakobstad.'

"The instruction in all of the schools is given gratuitously. The parents or guardians of the children have only to pay the costs of boarding. The oral schools are all to be both *internats* and *externats*, the children being boarded in the schools the *first* two years of their instruction, and boarded out in town the six last years.

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“The advent of the new organization marks a significant progress of the oral method, as the manual method until then was the ruling one in Finland, and the oral method for many years was only employed at the institution at Knopio (established 1874). The new Inspector, Mr. Valter Forsius, has largely contributed to this result.

Lars M. Havstad. ”

Australia: “In 1883 only about 12 per cent. of the deaf-mutes of Australian institutions were educated by the oral method, while in 1893 53 per cent. were instructed orally.

Samuel Johnson, “ *Superintendent South Australian Institution.* ”

Mr. Johnson's report includes detailed information concerning the schools of Australia. The following table has been compiled from his figures:

20

STATISTICS OF AUSTRALIA (1893).

NAME OF SCHOOL.	Total Number of Pupils.	NUMBER OF PUPILS TAUGHT BY THE Oral Method.	Manual Method.
1. New South Wales Institution	61	35	26
2. Victoria Institution	58	23	35
3. South Australia Institution	40	30	10
4. Queensland Institution	7	7	
Total	166	88	78

APPENDIX C. THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

A summary of recommendations extracted from the official report of the Royal Commission may be found in an Appendix to “Education of Deaf Children,” published by the Volta Bureau, p. 254; see also “Annals” 1889, Vol. XXXIV., pp. 300–307.

The ninth and tenth recommendations relate to methods of instructing the deaf, and read as follows:

“We recommend: . . .

“9. That every child who is deaf should have full opportunity of being educated on the pure oral system. In all schools which receive government grants, whether conducted on the oral, sign and manual, or combined system, all children should be, for the first year at least, instructed on the oral system, and after the first year they should be taught to speak and lip-read on the pure oral system, unless they are physically or mentally disqualified, in which case, with the consent of the parents, they should be either removed from the oral department of the school, or taught elsewhere on the sign and manual system in schools recognized by the Education Department. The parent shall, as far as practicable, have the liberty of selecting the school to which his child should be sent.

“10. That children who have partial hearing or remains of speech should in all cases be educated on the pure oral system. The children should in all schools be classified according to their ability.”

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APPENDIX D. TABULAR STATEMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB OF THE WORLD.

From the “Annals” for January, 1883, Vol. XXVIII., p. 61.

COUNTRY.	NO. OF PUPILS.	METHODS OF INSTRUCTION.	No. of Institutions.
Total.	Male.	Female.	Manual. Oral. Combined. Not Reported.
No. of Teachers.	No. of Institutions.	No. of Pupils.	No. of Teachers.
No. of Institutions.	No. of Pupils.	No. of Teachers.	No. of Institutions.
No. of Pupils.	No. of Teachers.	Australia	3 147 82 65 11 1 14 2 2 133 9
Austria-Hungary	17 1,147 656 454 64 17 1,147 64	Belgium	10 864 482 382 5 339 5 525
Brazil	1 32 32 3 1 32 3	Canada	7 803 397 406 84 1 1 150 27 5 653 57
Denmark	4 326 150 176 41 1 142 15 2	France	67 3,482 4 254 28 1,962 17 871 18 395
Germany	90 5,608 1,042 908 580 90 5,608 580	Great Britain and Ireland	48 2,650 1,413 1,237 244 8 558 54 20 496
Italy	35 1,491 815 676 237 34 1,405 227 1 86 10	Japan	2 65 37 28 7 2 65 7
Luxembourg	1 29 15 14 3 1 29 3	Mexico	2 30 23 7 7 2 30 7
Netherlands	3 465 256 209 40 3 465 40	New Zealand	1 22 13 9 2 1 22 2
Norway	7 283 155 128 34 6 224 23 1 59 11	Portugal	1 8 7 1 1 1 8 1
Russia, including Courland and Finland,	10 584		

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363 221 59 3 122 10 5 217 26 2 245 23 Spain 7 222 125 97 16 7 222 16 Sweden 17 680
421 259 76 2 111 9 3 68 10 5 324 35 7 177 22 Switzerland 11 380 182 198 39 11 380
39 United States 55 7,155 4,085 3,070 481 8 346 26 12 584 62 35 6,225 393 Total 399
26,473 110,751 18,545 2,029 32 1,642 130 239 13,246 1,182 91 10,566 654 37 1,019 63

1 The reports from France and Prussia do not indicate the sex of the pupils.

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APPENDIX E.

DAY-SCHOOLS SUPERSEDING BOARDING-SCHOOLS IN GERMANY.

In 1891 the Hon. John Hitz, Superintendent of the Volta Bureau, directed the attention of the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf to the following extract from the "Journal of the Royal Prussian Statistical Bureau for 1883," p. 217 (see "Proceedings of First Summer Meeting, 1891," p. 344):

"Taking into special consideration the deaf-mute institutions, we observe in later years a change taking place in their character; that is, boarding-schools are changing more and more into day-schools.

"The reasons which underlie this change are ascribed by experts to the following causes:

"1. The day-school affords to the pupils the beneficial change between school and home, and thereby increases, through intercourse with the world, his power of observation.

"2. Pupils can receive more individual attention than is possible in the boarding-school.

"3. The intercourse of pupils with different people promotes more especially lip-reading, and also, in general, speech, whereas the latter out of school hours is in danger of being dropped in the boarding-school and supplemented by gestures.

"4. Epidemics, which on divers occasions have been the means of greatly crippling the school work of the boarding-school, cannot so detrimentally affect the day-schools.

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"5. The conditions which in general the day-school presents are more in harmony with those of the parental homes, and are therefore more agreeable to the child's feelings, because in the day-school the spirit and order of family life are, as it were, continued to the child at school.

"6. The responsible labor of domestic training and home instruction of the boarding-school falls to the lot of the teachers principally, who in consequence thereof prematurely succumb, whereas the day-school divides these labors and cares and gives better promise of success."

At the same meeting of the speech association (see "Proceedings of First Summer Meeting," p. 342) Mr. Hitz presented the following table of statistics concerning German schools for the deaf, extracted from the "Organ" for 1890:

This shows the extent to which day-schools have superseded institutions in Germany up to nearly the present time.

23

STATISTICS OF GERMANY. From the "Organ" for 1890.

SCHOOLS.	Total Schools.	Boarding-schools.	Day-schools.	Mixed.	Total Pupils.	Boys.	Girls.	Male Teachers.	Female Teachers.	Classes.
Prussia	47	6	33	8	4,083	2,336	1,747	382	24	375
Bavaria	15	12	3	596	302	294	36	14	59	Wurtemberg
8	5	2	1	352	161	191	27	10	40	Saxony
3	2	1	390	219	171	41	36	Hesse	2	2
115	69	46	14	12	Baden	3	3	124	119	95
23	1	20	Els'ce-Loth'gen	4	4	178	91	87	12	13
21	Remainder of States	13	2	9	2	442	263	179	43	2
48	Total	95	34	49	12	6,370	3,560	2,810	578	64
611										

Mr. Reuschert, in his report from Germany, quoted in Appendix B, describes the nature of the mixed school (*inter-externat*), and speaks of it as "the school system of the future."

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